Executive Proclamation
State of South Dakota
Office of the Governor

Whereas, The first skirmish of the "Cold War" started June 26, 1948, with the Soviet Union's threat to blockade Berlin, cutting the supply of food and fuel to areas of Germany controlled by the Americans, British, and French; and,

Whereas, Facing a threat of World War III, President Truman ordered B-29s flown from Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, to England to make an impression on Stalin that he would not tolerate his actions to control the entire city of Berlin; and,

Whereas, The immediate response from the Allies has gone down in history as the "greatest humanitarian airlift in history", which supplied two million citizens of West Berlin with much needed coal, food, medicine, and other supplies; and,

Whereas, A cargo plane landed in Tempelhof every 3 minutes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 11 months with air traffic controllers instructing planes to fly at 5 levels of only 500 feet apart and 9 minutes between planes, which meant a plane was either landing or taking off at Tempelhof every 1½ minutes; and,

Whereas, Pilots were allowed 15 minutes on the ground in Tempelhof to unload cargo, receive a maintenance check and weather briefing, and head back to their home base, which led to an exhausted group of pilots to maneuver through the Soviets constant attempts to harass and confuse them at every opportunity; and,

Whereas, Members of the Berlin Airlift Veterans Association will gather in Rapid City, South Dakota, on September 29 through October 3, 2008, for the 60th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, considered to be the first nail driven to defeat communism:

Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim September 29 – October 3, 2008, as

BERLIN AIRLIFT WEEK

in South Dakota.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Fifth Day of September in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Eight.

M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:

Chris Nelson, Secretary of State